

Oral Questions

opposition does not like, I would almost certainly be criticized. This, in our view, would not be a fair program. There are better ways. Of course, when I prepare my budget I have to consider all the alternatives there are.

One of my big problems is this: I cannot understand the opposition. One day they complain about the size of the deficit, and another day they propose to cut \$5 billion from taxes. It is pure irresponsibility.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, I realize that the understanding shown by the Minister of Finance, of anything, is very limited. Has he read the review of the Economic Council of Canada and all the other reviews which indicate that stimulation is now needed?

My supplementary is this: in the report of the same task force we find the statement that continental free trade should not be pursued as a general policy, but only as a selective sectoral strategy where appropriate. The government had another report from the other place studying Canada-U.S. relations this summer, recommending that serious consideration be given to U.S.-Canadian free trade. Which of these recommendations, if either, is presently under study by the government? Does the government mean to adopt either one of them?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, we have talked very often about this problem. Of course, everyone is making all sorts of recommendations—the hon. member illustrates this very clearly in his question—and we shall take the best course. In some instances we have negotiated free trade arrangements with the Americans which have been very good for Canada—for example, the auto pact—and if there are other agreements of that sort which could be devised, that is all right; but we are not planning to develop an economy fully integrated with that of the United States.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**INDEMNIFICATION OF COURT COSTS OF MEMBERS OF FORCE**

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General in an effort to elicit more detail with respect to the policy of protection and indemnification of members of the RCMP, referred to in the House yesterday. Has the minister been able to discover the extent of the practice? How widely was it implemented?

Specifically, did Chief Superintendent Donald Cobb enjoy the protection and indemnity provisions under the same theory, I presume, as that by which the former minister gets support in his litigation problems?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman will recall that yesterday, when this matter was brought up, I indicated that it was related to a document

[Mr. Chrétien.]

which had been circulated and made public by the commission. The hon. gentleman will also recall that it refers to a policy within the force itself, which policy is being reviewed by the McDonald inquiry. He will also recall that initially, when the inquiry began its deliberations and I assumed my responsibilities, I indicated it would not be my policy to deal with matters before the commission on a day to day basis.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the minister will not give such a straightforward question at least a semblance of an answer. I want to put a question to him on a related matter. Has he been briefed on the circumstances in which a prominent Canadian journalist, reportedly Peter C. Newman, at the request of an ex-member of the RCMP conveyed information to the then solicitor general relating to testimony given before the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs in May of 1973? The minister was at that time a member of that committee.

Does he know what, if anything, resulted from the communication of information to the present Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and what if anything, was done about it? Has he seen correspondence directed to the then solicitor general by this ex-member? Has he had the benefit of that information?

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I recall being a member of the committee at the time but, of course, I was not exercising my present functions. I hope the hon. member will recognize that he has brought forward some specific facts with regard to which I cannot be expected to have knowledge at the tips of my fingers, as it were.

I am somewhat disappointed that in their two questions, hon. gentlemen opposite did not call attention to the amnesty recall program to which I have given some publicity and which will be receiving additional publicity in the immediate future.

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SPORTS**FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO PAN-AMERICAN GAMES**

Mr. Art Lee (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport). In view of the announced intention of the B.C. minister of recreation and the mayor of Vancouver to submit an application on behalf of Vancouver to host the 1987 Pan-American Games, can the minister advise the House whether the federal government intends to assist in this worthwhile endeavour?

Hon. Iona Campagnolo (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, the B.C. minister and mayor of Vancouver seem to be engaging in a new and unusual form of consultation, since I have heard nothing of this from them.